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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/667,741

09/22/2003

Bill H. Hilf

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12/05/2008

AKERMAN SENTERFITT

P. O. BOX 3188

WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33402-3188

EXAMINER

ANWARI, MACEEH

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2444

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/05/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/667,741	Applicant(s) HILF ET AL.	
	Examiner MACEEH ANWARI	Art Unit 2444	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 September 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

This action is responsive to the amendments filed on 9/26/2008. **Claims 1 and 3-4** were amended and **claims 11- 22** were canceled. No other claims have been amended, canceled, or newly presented. Accordingly, **claims 1-10** are pending.

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed 9/26/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In substance the applicant argues that **Nachman** does not teach or disclose: 1) identifying real-time affinity or similarity among the currently active sessions based on session data associated with the currently active user sessions; and 2) therefore not possible for **Nachman** to disclose forming a user group for users of user sessions having the identified affinity.
2. Regarding 1) and 2), the examiner respectfully disagrees. **Nachman** discloses: identifying real-time affinity or similarity among the currently active sessions based on session data associated with the currently active user sessions (**par. 40-41; link to list of other currently logged [or active] on users watching the same web page, pop-up messages [real time] and registering members and registered details**); and furthermore discloses forming a user group for users of user sessions having the identified affinity (**par. 40-41; link to list of other currently logged [or active] on users watching the same web page, pop-up messages [real time] and registering members and registered details**).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. **Claims 1- 10** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by **Nachman et al.** (hereinafter **Nachman**) U.S. Publication No.: 2001/0027474 A1.

Claim 1: A method for creating user groups in a network environment comprising the steps of:

monitoring a plurality of user sessions, each session being associated with a different user (**Abstract and par. 12- 13 & 44-45; specific users and user authentication**);

identifying at least one real-time affinity among the user sessions based on session data associated with currently active user sessions, an affinity being defined as a similarity between two or more user sessions (**Abstract and par. 2; real time communications, specific users and grouped users**) ;

responsive to said affinity identification, forming a user group for users of user sessions having an identified affinity (**Par. 17; group services and forums**); and

facilitating the users of the user group to engage in communication (**par. 14- 17; groups services and forums**).

Claim 2: wherein the facilitating step comprises the step of providing access to an interaction application for at least two of said plurality of user sessions responsive to said identified affinity (**Par. 14- 17; routing through WSM and forums**).

Claim 3: Wherein said prompting step further comprises the step of providing access to an interaction application for at least two of said plurality of user sessions responsive to said identified affinity (**Par. 14- 17; forums**).

Claim 4: Wherein said prompting step further comprises the step of establishing a communication pathway to facilitate real time communications between users associated with said at least two user sessions (**Par. 2 and 14- 17; real time communications and forums**).

Claim 5: Wherein said step of establishing a communication pathway further comprises the step of opening at least one of a chat session, an instant messaging session, a newsgroup, and a shared application (**Figure 1 and par. 5 & 17; Forums and instant messaging**).

Claim 6: Wherein said identifying step includes the step of evaluating session cookies associated with said user sessions (**Par. 37; cookies and client information**).

Claim 7: Wherein said identifying step includes the step of evaluating session objects associated with said user sessions (**Par. 37; cookies and client information**).

Claim 8: Wherein said session objects comprise at least one datum selected from the group consisting of a URL which has been accessed, an amount of time on-line, an item in a shopping cart, and a user identifier (**Figure 7; items 700 & 704**).

Claim 9: Wherein said user identifier comprises at least one of a postal code, an area code, a city, a county, a state, a province, a country and a continent (**Figure 7; items 700 & 704**).

Claim 10: wherein the facilitating step includes presenting a user interface in the user sessions of the user group (**Par. 17 and 44; forums and instant messaging**).

Examiner Note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings of the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant in preparing responses, to fully consider the references in its entirety as potentially teaching of all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

Conclusion

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

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extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MACEEH ANWARI whose telephone number is (571)272-7591. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:30-5:00 PM ES.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William Vaughn can be reached on 571-272-3922. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

M.A.

/William C. Vaughn, Jr./

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2444